

UPDATE # 100 - "CITY OF SAVANNAH"
B-17 Restoration
July 1, 2011

This 100th Update is coming to you on July 1, 2011, at the end of 30 months of effort into the "City of Savannah" project. Those of you who have been with us from the very beginning remember that cleaning dirt out of the fuselage was once our main chore. Today we will report to you about working on turrets and preparing to launch our first radio transmission from the completely restored radio room. This has been quite a ride so far!



January 15, 2009

We'll begin this milestone Update with several major Thank Yous: to the Burbach family, who enabled 44-83814 to make the trip down I-95; to the Kolb family for providing us with so much rich history on 44-83814; to Tommy Garcia for his guidance, time, kindness, and donations; to Dr. Harry Friedman for his advice, support, and the gifts of valuable equipment from his personal collection; to Bruce Johnson for being with our crews virtually every day; to Skip Shelton who is almost as good an artist as he is a pilot, for his artwork and friendship; and to the creator of the Flying Fortress 5K Run, Jane Harper, for all she continues to do for the project.

We also thank our generous friends in the corporate world: LMI, Gulfstream, Flight Safety, and JCB Corporations. All of these people, and organizations, have been instrumental in our project accomplishments during the past 30 months. Others with whom we have partnered include: Gary Norville, Bruce Orriss and the B-17 project staff and volunteers at our sister 8th Air Force Museum in Barksdale, Louisiana.

A major Thank You also has to go out to our prior administrative officer, Shelia Saxon, for putting together the now famous slide show of the arrival of 44-83814, soon to be renamed “*City of Savannah*”, at the Museum in January of 2009. You can view Shelia’s piece of project history at:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wfe7y7k20qY&feature=related>

There are almost forty volunteers working on this project. The Management Team consisting of Jerry McLaughlin, Jim Grismer and Dave Talleur have asked that a special note of thanks go out to Mighty Eighth CEO Henry Skipper for his belief in the project and his often stated confidence in the entire volunteer team.

Finally, a special prayer for the late Dr. Walter Brown. Walt was the inspiration for this project, and we are sure that he watches over us today.

On a current note, this past week saw a great deal of activity going on that was related to our project, but it took place away from the Museum. The big event was a trip by two of our top craftsmen, John Finch and Gil Patrick. Gil and John drove to Barksdale AFB to work with the “*Lady Liberty*” B-17 restoration team to help prepare the wood work that we have contracted to build for them.



John Finch and Gil Patrick in the cockpit of the “*Lady Liberty*” at Barksdale AFB

Gil and John also took pictures of metal work in the interior of “*Lady Liberty*” in order to help our metal team re-configure the nose of our aircraft from its civilian photographic configuration back to its original bomber mode with a Norden bomb site and chin turret.

The other event this week was the arrival of the ammunition boxes for the nose and waist gun stations for both the “*City of Savannah*” and the “*Lady Liberty*”. These finely crafted boxes were built and delivered to the Museum by one of our fantastic carpenters, Scott Witcher. Scott estimates that the ammo boxes each represent almost forty hours of work. That qualifies Scott for the 2011 Hundred Hour Club, and the year is only half over.



One example of Scott Witcher’s new crop of ammo boxes

As for upcoming events, there is a great deal of activity that you can expect to hear about in the final six months of 2011: the “*City of Savannah*” radio team is just about ready to make the first live broadcast from our airplane, on or about July 15th. Our brand new FCC call numbers are WW2COS. There may also be one or more turrets showing up at the Museum before the end of the year, and our web site should have final approvals for its opening by the end of the summer.

The fall season will hardly slow down our activity as the 2nd Annual Flying Fortress 5K Run, and a meeting of B-17 associations from throughout the country, will take place at the Museum in November.

As you can see in the picture, below*, there is no lack of enthusiasm on our part. The project is in high gear and the future looks very bright.



The 2011 “City of Savannah” Restoration Team*

From all of us at the “City of Savannah” project – thank you for your support for the past 30 months, and we hope to show you a lot more in the months to come.

**Picture credit goes to our newest volunteer, Skip Terpstra*

More to come . . .